



## ALTERNATE PERSPECTIVE: A STUDY TO THE NATURE OF THE 'STORY' ITSELF OF TAMIL FILM "MAARA"

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### ABSTRACT

Narratology is the study of narrative structure, which is a branch of structuralism. Describing about a certain thing in detail is narrative and the process of narrating things in detail is known as Narratology. The shift of narration from first person and the third person makes us shift the perception of the whole story itself and it makes us understand the narrator's side of the story. The Narratologist basic distinction lies between the 'story' and the 'plot'. Dhilip Kumar who directed the film "Kalki"(2017) is the director of the film "Maara"(2021), story adopted from the Malayalam movie "Charlie". A fairy tale attraction towards both Paaru and Maara had been shown in the film from the beginning itself through the story of 'in search of the lost fish'. The process of restoration revolves throughout the film through the characters Paaru, Maara and Vellaya as they withstands all the modernists and post modernists in a unique way.

**KEYWORDS:** Plot, Perception, Narratology, Connection, Restoration.

### INTRODUCTION

Narratology is the study of narrative structure, which is a branch of structuralism. Describing about a certain thing in detail is narrative and the process of narrating things in detail is known as Narratology. It is not just simply reading the story or getting to know the interpretation of the reader, instead the study of Narratology focuses on the nature of the 'story' itself as it is and understanding the concept as it is along with its geographical and cultural boundaries.

Dhilip Kumar who directed the film "Kalki"(2017) is the director of the film "Maara"(2021), story adopted from the Malayalam movie "Charlie". The team was clearly aiming for the adaptation of the core and not the remake, as both the director and the actor (Madhavan) do not like to make remakes. Dhilip Kumar in an interview to Indian Express told, "I belong to the tribe that is cynical about remakes"

The readers or the audience tend to understand the perspective of the narrator. The shift of narration from first person and the third person makes us shift the perception of the whole story itself and it makes us understand the narrator's side of the story. The first person narration of a character may include empathy for a certain character and it may not exactly portray the way what that character exactly went through. The burden would not be shared in the terms of pain and it only shows a person's view. But the third person narration would distribute the equal sharing of the burden.

Narratology is an Anglicization of French narratologie, coined by Tzvetan Todorov in his work "Grammaire du Decameron" in the year 1969. It can be traced back to Aristotle and again in modern Narratology it begun with Russian Formalist, Vladimir Propp and Milhail Bakhtin's theories of heteroglossia, dialogism and chronotype, which were first, used in his work "The Dialogic Imagination"(1975). Narrating a story is an art and it creates the overall effect. The significant effect of the story is to delay and be specific in imparting the information.

"The Victorian novelist Wilkie Collins famously said that the formula for writing a successful novel is 'make them laugh, make them cry – make them wait'"  
- Beginning Theory(217)

The Narratologist basic distinction lies between the 'story' and the 'plot'. The story is the actual sequence of the events that happened which have to be said from the beginning and then should move on chronologically. But plot is arranged, packed and narrating the main event, which is a version of story, that can go back in the name of flash back and could hint the future too at times.

The content of plot in the movie "Maara" was excellently portrayed by Dhilip Kumar using certain flash backs and giving the hint of who might the girl Meenakshi could be through the symbol of the conch in the chain of the sister Mary. When Paaru escapes from her home, she accidentally saw the painted pictures of her childhood fairy story in the walls and that was a hint that the one who painted these pictures would somehow be related to the story. It turns out to be those two know the story was in search of something and in the end they find something else.

The term of story and plot may change accordingly. David Lodge in his essay "Analysis and interpretation of the realist text" prefers the Russian Formalists

term 'Fabula' instead of story and 'sjuzhet' instead of plot. Gerard Genette uses another set of equivalent terms such as 'histoire' and 'recit', which is the same meaning of story and plot. When Paaru encountered the sketches of Maara, she investigated particular persons who has involved in his works and get to know about him more through others who were involved in his work.

When she met a drug seller, Chokku, he portrayed the woman Selvi as a prostitute. But she felt horrible about her work. Through her statement we come to an understanding that she was forced into this and her situation made her a prostitute. Her desires were so simple. All she ever wanted was to get beyond the sight of the lighthouse, where the light of the lighthouse could not reach her. And Maara made that wish come true and she chose her happy ending.

No one knows where Maara would be. Their description would make us feel he is a wanderer and would wander anywhere, anytime he chooses to. All he cares about was wandering and it seems like a lust to him even though he did help others throughout the way. A fairy tale attraction towards both Paaru and Maara had been shown in the film from the beginning itself through the story of 'in search of the lost fish'. But both wanted something and search for it like a lost fish. She wanted to find out Maara(her lost fish) to whom she felt a connection and Maara wanted to find his adoptive father's lost fish(Meenakshi) for his sake as he basically possesses the helping tendency that comes next to his wandering lust.

Their strong connection would be presented throughout the film even thought they only meet at the end. Paaru is a restoration artist and she was impressed by his work, which made certain things restored. He connects the restoration thing more than his art, in his life too. Though he was narrated by different kinds of people in the story, the connection never broke on make her see him how he like to restore things. The only difference is no one ever knows what is his biggest quest unlike Paaru. All characters those who are involved in his life, who were encountered by Paaru knows her quest is for Maara; meanwhile, no one knows what quest makes Maara unsettled, even though they know him personally.

Narrator hid things form the audience. He opened up slowly by narrating the events step by step handling the delay in a careful manner. Everyone who ever narrated his character starting from the thief, drug dealer, Usman bhai, Dr.Kani, who was saved by him from killing herself, wonder how he would always wander without telling anyone where he is and even a gypsy like him has got a family and home to settle on.

"We might say that the key to story-telling is not the imparting, but the withholding of information – readers often know things that characters don't, and vice-versa, and narrator keep things back from both."  
- Beginning Theory(217)

Everyone's description made the audience think that he likes to be and so chose to be this way until he opens his mouth and blurts out his story to Dr. Kani. He explained that he needed to and not wanted to. Velayya, was like an adoptive father to him and gave him everything since they both met. But in return he could do nothing rather than seeing him in longing agony. By the passing of years, velayya's lost love adds weight to the burden he is already carrying. And Maara is concerned and helped him because in the absence of Meenakshi and his search after years is something one could not get to witness that easy in this modern era.

His love for Meenakshi neither faded nor lost. Though all these years it stood still in heart and he never gave that up in any situation. More over, he chose his profession as a postman to get his Meenakshi back.

“Whenever I find pleasure in such precious moments, I am unable to enjoy it in every sense of the word. I can’t focus on anything. I am scared, Kani. In this world a thing considered as treasure today turns into trash tomorrow. A man with one letter and an old faded photograph incapable of betraying her even in his thoughts have been waiting for her for 50 years. Can’t I help this man retrieve his peace of mind? All I did was hunt high and low, visit every town that gave me a lead, and ended up as a lunatic scribbling on the walls of our hill-town.

- *Maara (2:11:41)*

This single scene of his opening up to Dr. kani made us realize for what he wandered everywhere even without telling anyone. That was all for the mission of finding the missing Meenakshi who was lost before 50 years. The process of restoration revolves throughout the film, Paaru and Maara through their job, velayyan implemented that in his life and he withstands all the modernists and post modernists.

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